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The University of
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NEWS RELEASE

Feb. 16, 2007

Contact: Barbara Koostra, director, Montana Museum of Art & Culture, 406-243-2019, barbara.koostra@mso.umt.edu.

MUSEUM RECEIVES MAJOR ART DONATION

MISSOULA—

The Montana Museum of Art & Culture at The University of Montana recently acquired an important donation of 161 works of Western art.

The works came to the museum through the generosity of the Bill and Polly Nordeen family.

The acquisition, known as the Bill and Polly Nordeen Collection, contains works by some of the most well-known pioneers of Western art, including Karl Bodmer, Edward Borein, George Catlin, Ace Powell, Edgar Paxson, Frederic Remington and C.M. Russell. The works are primarily oil and watercolor paintings that depict scenes of Western life, landscapes, portraits, wildlife and still life.

The collection also includes three hand-tinted lithographs by George Catlin that are beautiful examples of documentations of native life and landscapes he experienced during his excursions of the 1830s and 1840s.

Another piece in the collection, a 1903 oil painting by Edgar Paxson titled "At the Waterhole," depicts a buffalo herd with a waterhole in the foreground. A bull gazes directly at the viewer, creating a moment of tension.

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Western bronzes, Pre-Columbian ceramics and Mexican and American Indian masks and baskets are included in the collection.

The Nordeen family also has loaned the museum a watercolor and a drawing by Norman Rockwell, one of America's most popular illustrators, well-known for his cover images for the Saturday Evening Post and his sentimental paintings of American life.

Bill and Polly Nordeen chose to donate their extensive collection to MMAC because of the family's connection to UM. Their daughter, Liz, attended classes in UM's Department of English during 1973-74.

"I continue to be grateful that my parents' collection has found a home at UM," Liz said. "It felt very much the right thing."

Brian and Ben Hatfield, nephews of Liz Nordeen, are UM graduates. Brian received a degree in biology and math and Ben in media arts.

"MMAC's Permanent Collection has been built since 1894 through the generosity of collectors like the Nordeens," said museum Director Barbara Koostra. "It is through such donations that the museum serves as a steward for the state's art and cultural treasures and shares them with students and the regional community. The Permanent Collection belongs to all of Montana's citizens, and we are very grateful to receive this wonderful donation."

The museum's Permanent Collection now includes more than 10,000 objects. It is Montana's largest fine art collection.

For more information, call MMAC at 406-243-2019 or go online to <http://www.umt.edu/montanamuseum>.

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NOTE TO MEDIA: Digital images of select artwork from this collection are available on request. Please contact Karen Rice, MMAC coordinator of programs and publications, 406-243-2019, karen.rice@mso.umt.edu.

BK/bd

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